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## The Humans Answered

OC OC

I was just three weeks out of training and I already have had enough of this war. The Threens were winning. They were ruthless, sadistic and totally without mercy or compassion. Whenever they found one of our colonies, they started the occupation by destroying our birthing pools... killing our young while still in the larvae stage.

Helpless.

We fought back as best we could, but our ships were smaller, slower and poorly armed. We faced a war of extinction, and yet our leaders kept trying diplomacy. After every meeting with the enemy, they promised to stop their actions, but they never did. They always just lied to our leaders, and our leaders lapped it up like the groveling dogs they were.

I was assigned to the third response unit, outfitted with one of our races newest ships... top of the line.. state of the art... but still a joke compared to our enemies. One thing my ship did have going for it was a small faster than light engine. Unheard of really in such a small vessel.

An idea came to me as I lay in my bunk, talking with my wingmate. we were discussing how we just fled from a Threen assault, giving up an entire planet to them, condemning every one of us still left on that rock to a gruesome death.

"You know what?" I said, my arm draped over my eyestalks as if to hide from the fate we just imposed on many of our race. "I think the humans were right."

My wingmate coughed in shock. "Why bring those crazies into it?" he asked. "Don't we have enough to contend with already?"

Humans.

What they did... it opened many an eyestalk, that is for sure!

When the humans were first discovered and introduced to the galaxy at large, they were excited. They were always smiling, hopeful and optimistic for their futures.

They were so happy to find out that they finally were advanced enough to be accepted into the galaxy. I remember seeing screen grabs of the Dolan ambassador laughing.. literally laughing in the face of the human representatives.

"Advanced enough!" he roared with mirth "Who cares if you are advanced enough! Your planet is rich in resources! That's all the advancement we need!"

The smile on the humans faces seemed to crumple at that, though they valiantly tried to remain optimistic of the situation.

Until the Dolan's took untold millions of tons of resources, and refused to pay, saying "Now you know to get payment up front! That knowledge is the only payment you will get from us!"

And the Sleen empire.. they invited 100,000 humans to come live on their planet... only to slap them in chains when they arrived, and made slaves of them. When the humans, enraged at the treatment of their people demanded the release of those captured, the Sleen Empire said "Very well... we are sending the 100 thousand to you now!"

And then sent 100,000 Verridium tipped missiles into human cities and settlements.

It was after that when the Jandis Collective offered them medicine to treat the Verridium burns. At first, the medicine was a godsend, curing the burns and disease caused by the missiles... but then, every human that had gotten treatment died in horrible agony. The collective had used the humans as test subjects for a biological weapon.

The humans, after this, cut off all contact with the galaxy at large. They had become a laughing stock, and were the butt of many a joke and insult. They refused any ship, left any hail unanswered, and never left their own area of space. But two of their years later, they opened channels to the Galaxy, and broadcast this message:

"We welcomed you with open arms. Some of you laugh at us, and that is fine. But if you betrayed us, this is your only warning. RUN."

Oh how they all laughed... these stupid humans, what could they do?

The galaxy did not laugh for long. It seems that even though humans were the punchline of many a joke, they were still able to study the weapons and craft of their enemies, and improve on the designs.

The first sign that the humans might be a force to be reckoned with was when all 7 of the Sleen Empire core worlds were bombarded with tens of thousands of a new type of Verridium missile, ones which seemed to react violently with the atmosphere itself, making the air unbreathable and saw people immolated where they stood, even a thousand miles from where the missile hit.

Most of the galaxy thought this a fluke, that the humans blindly stumbled into creating a weapon that worked better than they planned... but when The Jandis Collective began to fall sick, world after world of collective members dying in agony from a disease so potent, it caused necrosis of the skin to where body parts started to fall off the infected, the galaxy realized this was

indeed the humans, exacting revenge. Medical teams from many worlds studied the virus, and it seemed the Jandis Collectives own disease they used on the humans was mutated with a human disease called "leprosy", and the result was disastrous.

The galaxy at large called on the humans, begged them to stop their warfare, and none so loud as the Dolans. They apologized to the humans, offered to pay back what they owed double.

They waited in fear for the human response. And when over a dozen large ships appeared in the skies above the Dolan homeworld seemingly out of nowhere, the Dolans were heard from no more. Their world was laid waste.

And the humans sent out one last message, over 600 years ago.

"Do not come near human space. Do not approach us. Do not contact us. Do not even mention us. If any ship approaches, be it a vessel of peace or war, it will be destroyed. There will be no further warning"

The galaxy's races, of course assembled for war. How dare this upstart race order THEM what to do... so thousands of ships flew to human space to wage war.

Not one of them returned. Not one.

Over the centuries, envoys have been sent to human space. All with the same result. The ships engines would cut out for no reason, then the ship would be destroyed.

"The humans were right" I repeated. "Everyone else in this galaxy sit there and watch us die, slowly at the hands of the Threen. They do nothing. We would all be better off if we were just left alone.... we would be better off if we were like the humans..."

And I stopped, My wingmate scoffed but an idea had been planted in my head. A wild, crazy idea, but no more crazy than flying off undergunned to fight a more powerful opponent.

Tomorrow, I would fly for human space. Tomorrow, I would do what no one dared to do for centuries.

Tomorrow, I would ask for help from the most dangerous race in the galaxy.

It is no small wonder that when I flew off, away from battle, my superiors thought me a coward. They threatened me with death if I did not return with their ship, but I was already light years from their grasp.. my ship was after all the fastest single manned vehicle my race possessed. Even as fast as it was, it took weeks for me to near what we all thought was human controlled space. I was nervous, scared that at any second I would be vaporized by some unseen hand, but still my ship flew on.

Days later, as my stores of food were dwindling, my engines cut out for no apparent reason. My hands flew on the controls, but all systems reported they were working properly. Perplexed, I wondered why, if everything was working, I sat dead in space, and then it hit me.

Humans

Quickly, I activated my communicator and broadcast on all frequencies.

"Greetings. I am Pilot Jav'een, of the third response unit of the Balkan race."

Silence was the only reply

"I come to beseech your aid. The Threen empire is decimating our people and our worlds, and the galaxy at large just sits there, waiting like vultures to pick at the bones of my people and my culture"

Silence.

"Once, your race also battled with the apathy and betrayal of the races of this wretched galaxy. You suffered once as we do now, from the disdain and callousness of races that pledge to help, yet do nothing, from races that swear to defend, but instead betray."

Jav'een checked his broadcaster. Everything seemed to be working. He continued

"We were discovered as a world a century after you had left the galaxy. We never had the opportunity to know you, but I know OF you.. the old races speak your names in fear, as the only race to stand up to the evil that permeates the very core of this expanse of space."

Silence

"I know why you turned your back on the other races.. I understand as my race is betrayed just as yours was"

Silence

"But you can help us bring an end to the way things are. How can you sit on the sidelines, doing nothing while peaceful worlds burn?"

Silence

"How can you be so cruel?"

Silence

Angry, Jav'een yelled into his communicator "How can you be so COWARDLY!"

He sat in fear, waiting for his death, when without warning, his engines came back online.

confused, he looked around, wondering what was happening, when across his communicator a single word scrawled from right to left.

.....RUN.....

Slamming his fist down in anger and frustration, Jav'een roared into his communicator.

"Run? RUN? My own people think I ran from a fight with the threen, now you tell me to run like the other races! You want to know the truth? You are the WORST race of them all! I will show you RUN!"

and with that, Jav'een ran to the engine room, ripped his sidearm from his holster, and fired it into the FTL engine that was his only way home. His only escape. His last hope. He fired until his weapon was dry, and the engine was little more than a pile of smoking slag metal.

Breathing heavily, He roared back into the communicator

"Cowards! You will not shoot me in the back! look me in the eyestalks if you are going to kill me and be done with it!"

Silence

In a fit of rage, Jav'een smashed his empty sidearm into the communicator again and again. Now it truly would be silent.

Two days later Jav'een's ship still floated dead in space. He sat on the floor, hugging his legs to his chest and still bristling with anger. He regretted his rash decision, and wished he had died fighting the Threen. At least that death would have meaning.

It was then that he felt a strange vibration. He looked up and around, trying to discern its source, when a strange voice, a human voice, but speaking perfect Balkan, seemed to fill his head, emanating from all around him.

"Pilot Jav'een of the Balkan Empire, I extend you greetings" the voice said

"We have heard your request for aid in your conflict, and having spent the last days researching your plight, we, the Terran Empire, gladly offer you our unconditional assistance."

Jav'een sat stunned, mouth agape.

"Please stand by for your vessel to be taken aboard the UES Kavik for repairs"

"th... thank you" Jav'een said timidly, unsure if the humans would be able to hear him.

"Your thanks are not necessary." Came the reply "In fact, we owe you an apology. We have distrusted the other races for so long, we forgot what it was like to be facing them alone. You reminded us of something we long thought was impossible"

"What is that" Jav'een asked timidly.

"That there can be other races out there... Brave. Defiant. Good at heart. Races that remind us of... **us**"

And with that, the words stopped, and Jav'een saw from his view port 6 large, angular vessels shimmer and appear from seemingly nowhere, huge and bristling with weapons.

Help was here

The humans answered